

1 What is Anger Management?

It's ok to get angry. We all do it. Anger is a normal human emotion that we all experience sometimes.

Our emotions are part of what makes us who we are. We love, we hate, we feel upset, feel relieved, get excited, feel down, feel worried, feel on top of the world, get angry as well as a multitude of other emotions throughout our lives. We might even feel all of those emotions within one day or within one hour... Even within a few minutes we can swing through a whole range of emotions. For example do you ever remember a time when you or a friend were accused of something you hadn't done? You may have experienced worry, confusion, amazement, disbelief, resentment, upset, anger... all within a couple of minutes.

So, anger is OK and normal and if you notice you are angry, it can be useful to you - a signal that something is wrong and you need to do something different - a great opportunity to make things better for you.

If your anger has become a problem, however, it is likely that you are experiencing the normal human emotion but more intensely or more frequently than is usual. It probably means that you have lost control, hurt yourself or others, had angry outbursts that have resulted in property being damaged, and said things that you normally know you should not say. You may have had problems at home, at school with other young people or teachers, outside school or at work. Perhaps it may even have been all of them? This may have caused you problems with being isolated or excluded from school, maintaining friendships, feeling disapproved of, being feared, getting grounded or banned from activities you like doing for example.

That's when it's not OK any more.

Mostly, the young people I meet who describe themselves as having an anger management problem tell me *“It’s just how I am. I can’t help it”*. I have heard that so many times... and it just is not true. The person who says it thinks it’s true but it isn’t. There are so many easy ways of breaking out of that pattern, giving yourself choices, so many ways of learning how to turn that anger down again so that you can regulate your behaviour and choose to do something different.

Anger Management is all about re-gaining control of your emotions, turning your responses back down to normal levels and getting on with doing the things you really want to do.

Everybody who follows the **“Stay Cool in School”** programme will be able to change how they used to react in situations that once got them angry. Other young people, like you, who have followed this programme say things like,

“It’s a million times better.”

and

“I just don’t do that [kick off] any more.”

Their teachers say things like,

“You wouldn’t recognise him - it’s like he’s a different boy.”

Their parents may say,

“I can’t believe it - it’s like I’ve got my daughter back.”

What do you think people will say to you?

You too will be able to see a difference for yourself, very soon after you have begun. You too will be able to stay cool at times when you used to feel angry. We are going to concentrate on staying cool in school, but of course the ideas in this book work wherever you are and whoever you are with.

I will help you to find ways of managing your anger, by noticing what caused it and dealing with both the cause and the physical effects of being angry. Because this way of managing your anger really works and is about helping yourself, instead of just going through the motions because someone says you have got to, you will soon find that you can **Stay Cool in School**. You will feel good about yourself, protect yourself from the hurt someone intended you to feel and avoid the consequences of getting so angry. That would be great wouldn't it? You get what you want. You stay safe. You stay in control. You get noticed for all the right reasons.

That's Anger Management.

2 How to Get the Most out of this Book

Before you go any further, you will need to decide how to use this book so that you get the most out of it.

There are a couple of decisions to make.

Are you going to go from cover to cover or just dip in?

You could read the book from cover to cover - and that could be a really thorough and well structured way of going about it. I say this because the book is written especially for you and the ideas are presented in a way that build up on each other, step by step, until by the end you have everything you need in what I consider to be the best order possible.

However, you could choose to just dip into it and find something new that is immediately useful to you. Therefore, if you want quick results, you could go straight to Chapter 8 Pick-and-Mix! and find a strategy that seems to hit the mark for you or appeals to you in some way. If you choose this way of using the book, then you will give yourself a quick boost, a head start on things. Then you could go back to the beginning and do more reading afterwards.

Are you going to read alone or get help?

It may help you to really get the most out of the book if you read it with someone else or at least discuss it with someone you trust. We can all achieve more with help or support than alone. If you can find someone to help you, they can sometimes see things from a different perspective to you, see the “the bigger picture”, help you make sense of something complicated or just be someone who will listen and discuss your ideas. Sometimes it just helps if someone encourages you not to give up, to carry on trying. If you haven’t already got someone to help you, it would be useful to first think who you might like to help you and then ask. If you don’t ask, they will never know that you need this help. So ask. If they can’t do it, for whatever reason, ask someone else.

Alternatively, you might choose to read this book on your own. This means that you don’t have to discuss your difficulties with anyone and you will be able to work out for yourself privately what to do about them. It might also be that you can’t find anyone to help or don’t trust anyone enough. In that case, it’s better to read the book alone than not at all.